

Message Text

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TO CINCPAC

S E C R E T STATE 155160

EXDIS MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENTIANE 979 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
CANBERRA LONDON PARIS JUN 30.
QUOTE S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0979

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: SHUM SNAR LA AU FR UK
SUBJECT: LAO AUTHORITIES COMPEL DETAINEES TO SIGN STATEMENTS

REF: VIENTIANE 0971 AND PREVIOUS

1. AN AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT JUNE 29 WAS GRANTED CONSULAR
ACCESS TO JOHN EVERINGHAM, CORRESPONDENT ARRESTED BY
LAO AUTHORITIES JUNE 23 (REFTEL). THE DIPLOMAT TOLD
US THAT EVERINGHAM WAS IN GOOD CONDITION DESPITE SIX
DAYS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. HE WAS MOVED FROM SOLI-
TARY CONFINEMENT ON JUNE 29 AND IS NOW CONFINED IN A
GOVERNMENT-CONFISCATED CHURCH IN VIENTIANE
ALONG WITH THE OTHER FIVE WESTERNERS ARRESTED WITH
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EVERINGHAM AT HIS HOUSE.

2. EVERINGHAM REPORTEDLY TOLD THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT
THAT HE HAD SIGNED A CONFESSION WHICH CONTAINED FIVE
CHARGES AGAINST HIM: 1) MAINTAINING AN INTELLIGENCE
NETWORK; 2) USING AND TRAFFICKING IN DRUGS; 3) CORRUPT-
ING THE MORALS OF LAO YOUTH; 4) ASSISTING REFUGEES

FLEEING TO THAILAND; AND 5) POSSESSION OF "WEAPONS OF WAR".

3. EVERINGHAM ADMITTED TO THE DIPLOMAT THAT HE HAD 500 GRAMS OF OPIUM IN HIS HOME AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST AND THAT HE HAD HAD RELATIONS WITH LAO WOMEN IN THE RECENT PAST. HE SAID THAT HE "CONFESSED" TO ALL CHARGES, HOWEVER, AFTER HIS INITIAL REFUSAL BROUGHT THE LAO RESPONSE OF "HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN PRISON?".

4. THE DIPLOMAT ALSO SAID THAT THE OTHER FIVE WESTERNERS ARRESTED WITH EVERINGHAM WERE COMPELLED TO SIGN STATEMENTS AGAINST EVERINGHAM. A FRENCH DIPLOMAT TOLD US THAT ONE OF THE FRENCH NATIONALS UNDER DETENTION SIGNED LITERALLY AT GUNPOINT.

5. KHAMPHAY BOUPHA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FORSYTHE JUNE 29 THAT EVERINGHAM AND THE OTHER DETAINEES WOULD BE RELEASED FROM CUSTODY AND EXPELLED FROM LAOS "VERY SOON", THOUGH THE CHIEF OF THE SECURITY DETACHMENT GUARDING EVERINGHAM INDICATED TO THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD ONLY BE RELEASED AFTER THE INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETED.

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6. SOMBAT CHOUNLAMANY, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPED NATIONS IN THE MFA, REPORTEDLY TOLD THE AUSTRALIANS THAT THE LAO AUTHORITIES HAD A PHOTOGRAPH OF EVERINGHAM SMOKING AN OPIUM PIPE WHICH WAS BEING LIT BY RAY ORAM, ONE OF THE BRITISH NATIONALS UNDER DETENTION.

7. THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT SAID THAT THE MOST THEY HOPED FOR WAS THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD BE EXPELLED SOON.

8. DESPITE EARLY RUMORS THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD BE ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CIA, AUSTRALIANS TELL US THAT NEITHER THE CHARGES CONTAINED IN EVERINGHAM'S "CONVESSION" NOR THE CHARGES AS LISTED BY SOMBAT IN DISCUSSION WITH THE AUSTRALIANS MENTIONED THE CIA.

9. COMMENT: AS WE NOTED IN VIENTIANE 0964, EVERINGHAM HAD BEEN RATHER CAREFUL IN HIS REPORTING NOT TO OFFEND THE LPDR. HOWEVER, WE GATHER THAT IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAD INDICATED TO VARIOUS NON-COMMUNIST FOREIGNERS IN VIENTIANE THAT HE WAS BECOMING SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONED ABOUT THE SOVIET AND VIETNAMESE ROLES IN LAOS. WE

HEAR THAT ONE WESTERN AMBASSADOR WARNED HIM HE WAS
TALKING TOO MUCH. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE LPDR LEARNED
OF HIS CHANGING ATTITUDE EITHER THROUGH THE RUMOR MILL
OR THROUGH SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES AND DECIDED TO
CRACK DOWN ON HIM WITH CRIMINAL CHARGES, INSTEAD OF
SIMPLY EXPELLING HIM, IN ORDER TO DIMINISH THE
CREDIBILITY OF ANY SUBSEQUENT UNFAVORABLE REPORTING HE
MAY DO.

9. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO CINCPAC, CIA AND
DIA.
CORCORAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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